

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 3-13-09
SJ 26

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Bill No. SJ26
Senator Carol Juneau
House Human Service Hearing
Resolution to Honor Native Women by Stopping Violence

March 13, 2009

Esteemed Members of the House Human Services Committee:

I have the honor of being a former trainer for the State of Montana and MCADSV who trained each of the seven reservations at least three times. I am a former domestic violence prosecutor, an attorney of 30 years (currently active in CO) and a trainer for 16 years. I founded and run a small foundation in Montana, the Native American Children's Association (NACA). I go to all of the Montana reservations working with children and developing mentor programs with NACA. I am a national, freelance speaker for law enforcement, the courts, and school trainings in full faith and credit (state, federal and tribal laws), domestic violence, suicide prevention, sexual assault, child abuse, diversity conquest trauma and diversity issues. I am a federally rated expert consultant accredited by the Montana Law Enforcement Academy and the Federal Indian Police Academy. I wrote a textbook and handbook for the Montana Encourage to Arrest Grant that is online at the Montana DOJ website. Most recently, I was a keynote speaker for the BIA at the Billings Summit.

I see many Native women with a history of abuse as I work around the State. I see that they often have child abuse in their past. I would say that almost every other Native woman I have met has some sexual assault story to tell. I also work with many Native children in Montana. I hear often from them that they have experienced abuse. How can a woman be healthy if she has been sexually assaulted as a young woman or child without help? This is a major issue and I see women struggling to come to terms with their past and seeking help-but there is very, very little available. The reservations were created purposely to isolate people and the social services have not been funded to provide the relief available elsewhere. The syndrome of abuse is so acute that those not seeking help will often mock those in need. Other community members, often victims themselves, from multi-generational families of abuse, consider burying their wounds the proper way of "getting on with their lives" or "handling it". That is the learned behavior of abuse. But any expert will tell you that it is not how the pain is healthfully handled. It comes out in the huge rate of domestic violence, disrespect for women and substance abuse that is considered "the way it is" and the homicide rate of intimate partner abuse on reservations that is 10% higher for Native women than non-Natives.

Federal statistics recently reported that 1 in 3 Native women have been sexually assaulted. I believe Native abuse figures are actually too low because of the conquest trauma reasons for not reporting to authorities and because 1 in 6 rapes are often only reported in white populations. Child abuse figures are conflicting or nonexistent because, again, the reporting to authorities is discouraged as historically fraught with danger to the whole family and considered disloyal. The various federal and other polling authorities also vary in the way they test-sometimes only counting children who are removed from homes, etc. The same abusive patterns we see in white cultures are magnified by conquest trauma in Native cultures. I see brave Native men and women working to change this pattern through education and reminding people of traditional Native values but this is the way it is today.

The level of incest, child abuse and multiple child trauma of Native children is something we are just becoming aware of and have yet to come to terms with today. The National Native Children's Trauma Center testified before Federal Congress last summer to start to bring these statistics to light.

When you look at federal prison statistics (and Native Americans comprise a disproportionate amount), 92% of young women in federal detention said they suffered abuse in the past (USDJJ). We must intervene with prevention and healing services now that we are aware of these facts because it means we have the means to prevent future ruined lives, stop the great economic cost to our society and protect our children. I founded NACA on a shoestring because I had to respond to the voices I heard on the Montana reservations and am dedicating all the time I can to this urgent need. We also need pilot alternatives to sentencing court programs for abused children in trouble which I am just starting. These are also our children. We must reach the mothers first. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Eleanor J. Guerrero, J.D.
Executive Director
Native American Children's Association

March 13, 2009

GREETINGS TO: House Human Services Committee

FROM: Patricia McGeshick, Director, Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes
Family Violence Resource Center

RE: SJ 26 -"A Joint Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of
the State of Montana Honoring Montana's American Indian Women by
Stopping the Violence Against Them"

I am Patricia McGeshick, a member of the Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes. For the Past 22 years I have been directing programs and services to victims and working to end violence against women and children in our communities on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Northeastern Montana. I am the President of the newly formed Montana Native Women's Coalition with representatives of the seven Indian Reservations in the State of Montana. I am also seated on the Federal Advisory Task Force Title IX under the Violence Against Women Office.

I fully support the Bill SJ 26, A Joint Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Montana Honoring Montana's American Indian Women by Stopping the Violence Against them, sponsored by Senator Carol Juneau. Her leadership in taking the initiative for promoting protection for Native Women in Montana is a unique quality. Your passage of the Bill will promote equality for all women in Montana by collaborating, supporting services and resources, and ensuring that the federal government responsibility to investigate and prosecute violent crime on Indian Reservations is a high priority.

Leadership in this critical Bill should rise to next level of supporting Congressional Hearings where victims, Reservation advocates and Tribal leadership can voice the impact of violence towards women and children on Indian Reservations. The outcome would be support for increased justice and accountability by enabling tribal authorities the right to prosecute crimes committed by non-Indian perpetrators on tribal lands, and increase the sentencing guidelines under the Indian Civil Rights Act.

It is unfair that native women on Indian Reservations in Montana continue to be beaten, raped by non-Indian perpetrators where they should feel safe living on their own lands. In working collaboratively and respectfully with Federal, State, and Tribal entities we will be able to help our native sisters heal from generational violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of all my native sisters suffering on Indian lands.